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**HOUSE BILL 2526**

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**State of Washington 65th Legislature 2018 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Hudgins, McBride, and Wylie

AN ACT Relating to creating a committee to consider state elections policy; adding a new section to chapter 29A.04 RCW; and creating a new section.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature finds that there is no more core tenant of our democracy than the elections that facilitate decision-making by elected and appointed leaders. It is also clear election policy is not static and requires the constant input and thought of those involved in the election process. A part-time citizen legislature needs the input of many voices year round to make sure our state democracy is as safe, secure, stable, and robust as possible. This dynamic discussion is based on other established boards, commissions, task forces, and work groups that support our part-time legislature with input and recommendations. The legislature therefore establishes an elections policy committee to assist legislators with input and recommendations on election policy matters.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 29A.04 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The elections policy committee is created to review issues related to the administration of state and local elections and to make recommendations to the legislature on election policy. The committee shall include the following members:

(a) One member from each of the two largest caucuses of the senate, appointed by the president of the senate;

(b) One member from each of the two largest caucuses of the house of representatives, appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives;

(c) A representative from the office of the governor;

(d) A representative from the office of the secretary of state;

(e) A representative from the Washington association of county auditors;

(f) A representative from the Washington association of counties;

(g) A representative from the association of Washington cities;

(h) A representative for special purpose districts, appointed by the governor;

(i) Two representatives of recognized state or national groups that focus on election policy advocacy, appointed by the governor;

(j) Two representatives of recognized state or national groups that represent minority voter interests;

(k) Two representatives of state or national groups that focus on nonpartisan election policy research and analysis; and

(l) A member of the public, appointed by the governor.

(2) The secretary of state, or his or her designee, shall set the date of the initial meeting of the committee and chair the initial meeting. The committee shall choose two cochairs from among its legislative members at the initial meeting. Additional meetings shall be set by the committee cochairs.

(3) The committee may invite stakeholders and interested individuals and organizations to present and participate as nonvoting members at committee meetings.

(4) Staff support for the committee must be provided by the office of the secretary of state. The expenses of the committee must be paid equally by the senate, the house of representatives, and the office of the secretary of state.

(5) The purpose of the committee is to bring together a broad range of interested parties to review state election policy and consider recommendations for promoting and improving voter participation and efficient election administration. The committee may consider policy related to voter registration and turnout, election dates, ballot returns and canvassing, the methods for collecting and analyzing election data, and other issues related to election policy the committee determines to be appropriate. The committee shall set a schedule each year of topics and issues for the committee to address.

(6) By December 1st of each year, the committee may make recommendations to the governor and the appropriate committees of the legislature on any proposed legislation or policies approved by the committee.

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